private entrepreneurs to make capital investment on equal sharing basis. Though since inception the Coal India Ltd. has been catering to the needs of steel sector and also to the needs of the entire country, but it is earning profit only for the last five years and is not in a position to mobilise adequate funds to develop or restructure its mines to match the needs of the next decade.

The Central Government should therefore, streamline and restructure this core sector on the same pattern as has been followed in the case of captive coal mines of Tata.

(ii) Need to review the declared support price of Copra

[English]

SHRI T. GOVINDAN (Kasargoda) : Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the Union Agriculture Minister and the Government of India towards the poor support price declared for copra. The coconut farmers are totally disappointed by this. As Kerala's economy is based on coconut price, ups and downs in coconut price would also affect the economy of the State. There is no representation in the Central Agricultural Evaluation Commission from Kerala. The Government of Kerala had convinced the Centre about the increase in copra price. It is a just demand to evolve a separate fund for agricultural damage from natural calamities. The Government of Kerala has demanded to include all crops in the agriculture insurance scheme and to exempt small and marginal farmers from paying premium. It is true that the coconut production in Kerala is declining because of various diseases. Till date, the Government has not succeeded in providing effective preventive measures. There must be a comprehensive project to remove ill and old trees and plant new hybrid varieties.

I request the Union Agriculture Minister to reconsider the declared support price for copra.

(iii) Need to Protect the interests of Sugar cane growers particularly in U.P.

[Translation]

SHRI BRIJ BHUSHAN TIWARI (Dumariaganj) : There is wide spread resentment and confusion amongst the sugar cane growers of Uttar Pradesh as a result of quashing of the orders of the U.P. Government by Allahabad High Court on fixation of sugar cane prices and non-payment of increased sugar cane prices by the sugar mill owners. A huge sum of Rs. 250 crore is still outstanding for payment to the farmers. Whereas as per the UP Sugar cane Purchase Act and rules thereunder, making payment of price for sugar cane within fifteen days procurement is mandadory and in case the payment is not made within the stipulated period, then an interest of 12.5 per cent would have to be paid on an it. But this rule has never been followed strictly as a result of which the condition of sugar cane growers have become even more miserable.

Out of 118 sugar mills in the state crushing is going on only in 115 mills. The Central Government sugar mills at Gauri Bazar and Anand Nagar have been closed down as a result of which the sugar cane crop is decaying in the fields. As a result of closur of mills at Anand Nagar, the condition of sugar canre growers of Maharajganj and Siddhartha Nagar has become very miserable because sugar cane is the only cash crop growth by the farmers of this area.

It is, therefore requested that the Government should ensure the payment of the same price for sugar cane as was fixed by the U.P. Government. Arrangements should be made for sale of sugar cane of the farmers of Siddhartha Nagar and Maharaj ganj who are affiliated with Anand Nagar Mill. These two mills of the Central Government should be revived up at the earliest and immediate steps should be taken to ensure remunerative price to sugar cane growers.

(iv) Need to waive off outstanding Special Term Loan against Punjab

[English]

PROF. PREM SINGH CHANDUMAJRA (Patiala) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, Special Term Loan of more than Rs. 5500 crore is outstanding against the Punjab Government. This amount has accumulated over the years when the State Government was handling the problem of militancy which was a national problem. The Punjab Government is not in a position to make payment of this huge loan. It is requested that the Central Government should waive off this loan.

Last year also, a delegation of the Punjab MPs had met the Prime Minister on this behalf and he had assured of a favourable consideration in the matter.

The former Prime Minister Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao had declared the waiver of the loan when he visited Punjab in 1995 but no action was taken thereafter. I, therefore, request the Union Government to waive off the outstanding loan of the Punjab State for the overall development.

(v) Need to set up a new Railway Zone in Bilaspur District, Madhya Pradesh

[Translation]

SHRI PUNNU LAL MOHLE (Bilaspur) : The people from various political parties, ordinary citizens and members of Yuva Sangharsh Samitee of district Bilaspur of Madhya Pradesh have been agitating and going on hunger strike for the past 158 days. There is great resentment among the people of that areas against the Government over this issue and the situation can be explosive. Last year such agitations the Bilaspur Railway Station in Madhya Pradesh was set on fire and railway property worth Rs. 300 crore was damaged.

I, therefore, urge the Government to give sanction for setting up a new Railway Zone in Bilaspur district.